



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Wait - Don't Put Away That Sunscreen**

*UCAN Says Cold Weather Months Still Pose Risk*

**(Salt Lake City, UT)** - The first snowfall is not a sign to pack up the sunscreen for the year. The sun is in the sky 365 days per year, and The Utah Cancer Action Network reminds Utahns that it's important to protect their skin even during the autumn and winter months. Utahns are particularly at risk for damaging sun exposure because ultraviolet radiation increases four to five percent with every 1,000 feet above sea level.

There are many reasons why it's important to protect skin from sun damage during the winter. First, just because it isn't hot outside doesn't mean the sun can't damage your skin. It's possible to get a powerful dose of ultraviolet radiation even when it's cold. Second, it's possible to get sunburned through clouds and haze. Clouds block as little as 20 percent of the harmful UV radiation. Third, reflections from the snow can more than double the danger from the sun's harmful UV rays. Finally, both snow and strong wind reduce the effectiveness of sunscreen.

"Thalia A. Swinyer, R.N., Dermatology Research Center, cautions, "When you're outside enjoying the wonderful Utah weather, remember to protect your skin because snow increases reflective radiation. In fact, snow is every bit as reflective as water and reflective surfaces can bounce back as much as 90 percent of the sun's rays."

According to Janet Heins, UCAN spokesperson at the Utah Department of Health, although our bodies are less exposed to sunlight during the winter, there are still many exposed areas that are likely to get sunburned while skiing and participating in other winter sports. Sunscreen should be applied to the face, lips, ears, neck, hands, and scalp if hair is thinning.

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This winter, a new UCAN skin cancer TV message features "Sun Guy", a man dressed as a huge sun. He reminds parents to protect themselves and their children from its harmful rays. For more information about UCAN's skin cancer awareness campaign visit [www.ucan.cc](http://www.ucan.cc) or call the health resource line at 1-888-222-2542.

Here are some sun safety tips to keep in mind while out and about this winter:

- Avoid unnecessary exposure, especially during the sun's peak hours, 10 AM to 4 PM.
- Take breaks from the sun in shaded areas, and remember that sunlight can bounce off reflective surfaces like snow, and reach you even beneath a tree.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours because sweating can remove sunscreen
- In ice and snow protect yourself by wearing a hat, sunscreen, lip balm and sunglasses.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*